

MEETING SUMMARY
IHS / VHA Steering Committee Meeting
August 5, 2004, 2:00-3:30 PM EST

ATTENDEES

The group convened by conference call.

Members Present

Frances M. Murphy	Craig Vanderwagen	Al Batres
Linda Pyne	Reece Sherrill	Valerie Parker
Randy Petzel	James Floyd	

Staff Present

Sherrie Hans	Candace Jones	
Clayton Curtis	Keith Longie	Amy Hertz

Not Present: James Toya, Elmer Brewster, Chuck Nesby

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Dr. Murphy presented the proposal from the Behavioral Health Workgroup for review and approval. The Workgroup recommends establishing outreach and readjustment programs for returning OIF/OEF AI/AN veterans, their families and their communities.

Steering Committee members discussed the success of peer counseling in the Tribal Veteran Representative program. Mr. Floyd noted that standard curriculum and training programs can be effective means to develop these lay counselors. Both Dr. Petzel and Mr. Floyd emphasized the importance of involving the Tribal leaders in the establishment of such programs and in the selection of the counselors.

The Steering Committee noted that it may be as important to refresh the training of VHA staff regarding the mental health needs of returning soldiers as it will be to provide this training to IHS and Tribal members for the first time. The use of telehealth linkages to provide counseling services was suggested. Mr. Sherrill and Mr. Floyd noted that community resources, like community health nurses and the TVRs, may provide one means to conduct outreach in communities. Materials should be developed for distribution and sharing with the Tribes.

The proposal was approved with the comments that 1) materials and information should be broadly distributed to Tribes, IHS and VHA sites, 2) formal pilots should be focused at a select number of sites where there are high numbers of returning veterans, including urban sites.

DIABETES PREVENTION

Dr. Vanderwagen and CAPT Jones provided an overview of the proposal from the Diabetes Workgroup. The options under consideration by the Workgroup for local

collaboration were presented. The national activities under discussion to promote collaboration were also discussed.

Steering Committee members approved the initiative in concept and provided the following feedback on the proposal:

- ❑ Be more specific in the initial focus. In particular, identify locations / areas / programs where IHS/Tribes do not have a strong presence, such as in urban areas, where VA may be able to make more considerable contributions toward developing a strong base of activity. Also consider locations around the country where treatment and services can be linked with the prevention activities.
- ❑ Pick one specific approach and ‘move briskly’ into implementing the program. Target 3-5 sites.
- ❑ To build on what IHS and VHA have already done, strive to better understand what elements are necessary to achieve an effective and sustainable implementation of a successful program. In particular, methods to promote patient compliance would be of particular interest. Ensure that this issue is a focus of the evaluative measures collected by the program sites.
- ❑ In addition to addressing the issues outlined above, the SC also asked the diabetes group to return to them with specific steps that the workgroup will undertake to develop and implement a program.

IT WORKGROUP

Keith Longie and Clayton Curtis provided an update on IT sharing. Both the local partnership activities and the national convergence plan were discussed. The Steering Committee agreed with the Workgroup plan to submit a joint Project Management Plan for IHS-VHA IT sharing by the next SC meeting.

UPDATES

The Steering Committee was informed of upcoming joint presentations at the VHA Senior Management Conference (August 17-19), the VHA Native American Representative Conference (August 20), the IHS Health Summit (September 22-24), VISN and Area Directors meeting (October 19) and the IHS Technology Conference (August 23-27). Ms. Hertz discussed the work of the Communications team and noted that the SC members would be receiving a talking points document to review by email within the next month.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held in December 2004.